

Julia Holter
Heidelberg, Karlstorbahnhof, 2014-07-11

Play list for the evening: available as an image, but the writing is difficult to decipher.

A strange set of elements at the location this time. Half of the space had actually been cut off in order to ... hm ... to create a certain density and maybe even intimacy. See the images for a clearer impression of how things looked like. In the end the place has been crowded to quite a large extent... and filled with folks from all ages.

One of the disadvantages of our times is that drinking and driving a bicycle is somewhat out of the question. You can get into trouble for doing so. Therefore, I had to use the bus for getting to the venue and considerably early, because I wanted to avoid a larger walk on foot; the buses do not always take the entire route in the evening. Of course I did not look forward to killing a good amount of time there ... Yet, it exactly this proved to be quite interesting. A glance over the first images of those that have been uploaded, reveals a strange kind of formation of various shaped that had somehow been placed on a rack. With the help of a beamer various kind of textures and the sort had been projected on this, which added to an otherwise empty space an interesting point of attraction – no, it had been of no importance during the concert.

Once the band entered the stage they did this without much of announcement and even the crowd remained surprisingly silent; no cheering ... nothing. An unintentional understanding about the atmosphere and how it is not supposed to be shattered or disturbed. In the end it is the music the counts, while those who celebrate it and those who cannot wait but to suck it up are actually nothing more than victims of it. Each on their own side of course.

“Art-Pop”, this had been the label used by the venue for the announcement of the band. A bit strange to be honest, because it reveals nothing, while being pretentious at the same time. At least it points a bit into a proper direction. Julia Holter's music falls indeed out of the realm of the ordinary and the band celebrates this in numerous approaches throughout the entire concept. Sometimes fragile, sometimes dreamy, sometimes noisy, sometimes dynamic. She, keyboard and vocals, and accompanied by a cello, a saxophone, a violin, drums and towards the end a guitar.

The concert is a play with the expectations. Sweet how the instruments are not reduced to the ordinary sounds and styles. The shrill screams of the violin, the odd vibrations created by the saxophone and the countless ways on which one can beat on a drum-kit. Those musicians attempt to offer more, attempt to broaden the sphere of what some might commonly be associated with pop music. This evening proves also to be an example on how music from such a genre does not have to offer pleasantries. Already with the opening a certain direction had been made clear and the band hardly ever wandered away from this. Bluesy, melancholic, introspective. It is personal without being too loaded with cliché, which has to do with the way the vocals appear and how it is difficult to fully grasp the expression of the words. Julia Holter's compositions create a distance rather than taking the audience by the hand. One feels amazed and bewildered with each new track, simply because the band is unpredictable ... and this in a positive kind of way. Yet at times ideas sound as if they are only half-completed. Some songs end all too sudden... and one would long for a bit more. Not daringness in venturing further, but in intentionally keeping stuff away from the audience. I recall a ghost story in which a woman tells her very old mother stories every evening before going to bed, but the narration ends in the middle of the stories. This is how the mother survives for one more night.

The intimacy of the local of this evening added to the positive impression. An interesting band for small locations. Next year they might return and it would be nice to see them again. For some more half-told stories.